

**Summary Report Of
The Evaluation of King County Sheriff's Office Training Project
For Officer Response To Children Present
At A Domestic Violence Incident**

November 2005

**Project Supported by the
King County Department of Community and Human Services,
Community Services Division,
King County Women's Program,
Domestic Violence (DV) and
Child Protective Services (CPS) Collaboration Project**



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The King County Sheriff's Office Training Project was conducted in partnership with:

**King County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney
King County Sheriff's Office
Harborview Research and Injury Prevention Unit
New Beginnings
Public Health – Seattle & King County
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Children and
Family Services, Region Four**

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Background/Need of the KCSO Officer Training Project

The Domestic Violence (DV)/Child Protective Services (CPS) Collaboration project is funded through King County Women's Program. This project works with agencies in King County to improve systems practices and collaboration between systems through the efforts of an interdisciplinary Best Practices Workgroup. In 2000 the Best Practices workgroup began to analyze the implications of a one-year referral project between King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) and CPS. KCSO DV Investigations Unit (DVIU) had identified that responding officers to DV incidents where children were present, needed support and resources to address the needs of the children. KCSO met with the CPS program manager and supervisors and made a plan to refer the cases to CPS. From December 1998 to November 1999 the KCSO referred to CPS all cases involving children under the age of 12, living in areas served by KCSO, and who were present at a DV incident. During this time a total of 398 cases were referred to CPS. Of these, 186 were from Southeast King County, 117 cases were from Southwest King County, and 20 cases were from North King County. The referral project was terminated as concerns had surfaced with providers as to the potential negative impact on victims following automatic referral to CPS in these cases.

An evaluation of the pilot referral project began in 2000. A convenience sample of 100 cases was selected and data extracted for review of CPS outcomes, filing of criminal charges related to the DV incident and criminal justice system outcomes. The findings from this analysis were made available in June 2002 report entitled "Summary Report: King County Sheriff's Office Universal Referrals to Region Four Division of Children and Family Services for Children Present during Domestic Violence Report." This report is available through the King County Women's Program. The findings from the 100 case reviews were as follows.

- **CPS outcomes:** Of the 100 cases referred to CPS, most were taken as "Information Only" into the CPS database and did not receive CPS investigation or any further follow up by CPS. A total of 38 or 38% of the sample cases that were referred to CPS received an investigation; however, in only 6 investigated cases were there any substantiated or founded child abuse and/or neglect findings and most of these findings were for factors unrelated to the DV incident. Most of the CPS investigated cases were unsubstantiated or inconclusive for child abuse and/or neglect.
- **Criminal Charges:** Of the 100 cases reviewed, 66 or 66% of the cases sampled resulted in the filing of criminal charges related to the DV incident. For these cases, a total of 96 separate charges were filed. The majority of charges were for misdemeanor offenses. Out of the 96 charges filed, 54 charges (56%) were for Assault 4th degree DV. The following criminal charges, from the most represented to the least represented crimes respectively, were filed for these cases: Assault 4th Degree DV (gross misdemeanor),

Interfering with the Reporting of DV (misdemeanor), Violation of Orders, Malicious Mischief 3rd degree, Vandalism, Harassment, Arson (felony), Assault 3rd degree (felony), Criminal Trespass (misdemeanor) and Reckless Endangerment.

- **Criminal Justice Outcomes:** Of the 66 cases with criminal charges, the criminal justice system outcomes were as follows. In 28 (42%) of the cases the defendants entered a guilty plea, in 19 (28%) cases the charges were dismissed, in 13 (20%) cases the defendants entered a Stipulated Order of Continuance (SOC), and in 2 (3%) cases the defendants were found not guilty. In 4 (6%) cases the defendant was on an active warrant status or the case outcome could not be determined.

In order to gather detailed information regarding response and documentation by KCSO and CPS response, ten cases were pulled for extensive review. Key findings and recommendations were made in the aforementioned report. In the report the key findings for KCSO response were:

- It was difficult to determine from KCSO reports how children who were exposed to DV were evaluated at the scene.
- KCSO reports contained insufficient information on children. Most only included the children's names and ages on the KCSO DV supplemental form.
- Three of the ten extensively reviewed cases included allegations of an assault to a child in supporting documentation in victim or witness statements, yet there was no documentation regarding the child's assault in the responding officer's report.

In reviewing these findings, the Best Practices Workgroup made recommendations for the KCSO to develop and implement deputy training on response to children present at DV incidents. It was recommended that guidelines be developed for assessing children, talking with children, documenting effectively and CPS referral protocols.

Early in 2002 KCSO convened a workgroup to begin designing and implementing an officer training project. A multidisciplinary team comprised of protection order advocates and attorneys from the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPAO), program manager and supervisors from CPS, a DV/CPS project coordinator from Public Health – Seattle & King County, a DV research specialist from the Harborview Research and Injury Prevention Unit, a DV advocate from New Beginnings, and the Captain, Sergeant and Detectives from KCSO DVIU met over a year to devise the training project. For this project the work group developed:

- Officer response guidelines to effectively assess and intervene with children at DV incidents
- Documentation guidelines
- Revisions to the KCSO "DV supplemental" form (see attached)
- Training materials and Power Point presentation
- CPS reporting protocols
- Officer pocket guide (see attached) to prompt officers in responding to children at DV incidents

In March 2003 a training pilot project was implemented with the KCSO Shoreline precinct. A pre and post training evaluation was conducted to review officer documentation. This first

evaluation did demonstrate a positive impact of training through an increase in documentation about the children. An officer survey was also distributed to evaluate training materials and the officer pocket guide. Officers who participated in training indicated a positive response to training and training materials. Training materials were reviewed and revised after the training pilot was completed.

Training was then implemented with remaining KCSO precincts between September 2003 and October 2004. The training team consisted of a prosecuting attorney from KCPAO, the KCSO DVIU Sergeant, and a CPS intake supervisor. The DV/CPS Project Coordinator served as a back up trainer and also recorded officer's questions and feedback during trainings. The training team presented the training content to officers in 48 separate roll call sessions during the two year project.

Background and Purpose of the 2005 Officer Training Evaluation Project

The initial findings from the training project were quite remarkable. KCPAO attorneys noted a significant change in the level of documentation about children in the KCSO officer reports. To fully understand the impact of the training a post training evaluation project was implemented in 2005 to evaluate the effectiveness of the training project. The purpose of this review project was two fold. *One* was to evaluate the effectiveness of training on officer response as evidenced by their documentation about the children present at a DV scene. *Two* was to evaluate the appropriateness of the CPS reporting protocols that were devised for the training project.

The remainder of this report summarizes the findings of the post-training evaluation project. In the first quarter of 2005 KCSO reports were pulled for evaluation. To be included in the study sample, the case must have met the following criteria:

- The incident of DV occurred on or between January 1, 2005 and March 31, 2005.
- KCSO officer did one of the following: responded directly to the DV scene, took a report of a DV after the incident, or took a report on the violation of a protection order that had occurred during the study period.
- The responding KCSO officer submitted an incident report
- The KCSO officer documented on the DV supplemental form that children were present at a DV incident.

Case reports were collected from all KCSO precincts except for Shoreline. Data was not available for the Shoreline precinct as their reports are not forwarded to the KCSO DVIU. During the study period of January through March 2005, for the three precincts that the sample was drawn, there were a total of 2244 calls made to KCSO officers for family disturbances. However, the majority of family disturbances calls did not result in the filing of a report by the responding officer and could not be included in the study sample. A KCSO report is mandatory only when a crime has occurred and/or an arrest has been made. In this evaluation a total of 94 reports were identified that met the evaluation's inclusion criteria and were included into the study sample. In one case, two incident reports were filed by two responding officers, thus the sample represented 93 unduplicated cases.

The responding officer's incident report, DV supplemental form, and any adult or child victim statements were pulled for analysis. The reports were read in entirety by the DV/CPS Collaboration Project Coordinator. Information from the supporting documentation was entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. In cases with documented risks of child abuse and neglect, information from CPS and KCPAO databases was also gathered and entered into the data file.

It is important to note that the analysis of data in this report is descriptive in nature and cannot be used to draw conclusions or complete findings. The analysis of these reports is limited by several factors.

- Cases were drawn from a convenience sample of available data and not all precincts were included in the sample.
- Data is not all inclusive and fully representative of the population. The data does not cover all areas and cases served by KCSO.
- The data represents only situations in which an officer completes a report. There are many incidents officers respond to where they do not write a report as the officer was unable to determine if a crime was committed (i.e. verbal dispute only).
- The data represents cases where the responding officer had documented on the DV supplemental that children were present at the scene. If there were no indications on the DV supplemental that children were present, the report was not identifiable for the sample group.
- The data only includes what was recorded in a report. The documentation may not represent all the risks posed to a child from a DV incident or past DV incidents.

Despite the data limitations, there are strengths in the available data for analysis.

- A significant number of cases were reviewed. Per 2004 data KCSO had a 15% arrest rate in family disturbance calls. Just over half or 53 cases (56%) of the 93 study sample cases did involve an arrest. If the 2004 arrest were applied for the sample group, the reviewed cases resulting in arrest represent approximately 16% of KCSO family disturbance arrests for the three month study period.
- In all of the reports reviewed there was documentation indicating the presence of a child at a DV incident.
- Officers also recorded details about the children in their reports including:
 - How many children were present at the scene
 - The children's names, ages, and sex,
 - Their location during the DV incident,
 - What the officer observed with the children
 - What happened to the children during the DV incident
 - Child safety risks with the DV incident
 - Descriptions of assaults to children
 - Descriptions of children's injuries
 - Children's statements about their observations and experiences

Data Results:

Changes in Frequency of KCSO Documentation about Children:

- As reported anecdotally by KCPAO staff, this review of KCSO reports demonstrated a significant change in documentation patterns by responding officers. In all the reviewed DV supplemental reports the officers indicated children were present at the scene. For 91 of the 93 cases there was information recorded about the children on the DV supplemental such as children's names, dates of births, location during the incident, and child demeanor. This finding was a significant improvement from the initial June 2002 evaluation of KCSO reports and the 2003 Shoreline precinct pre-training report evaluation where little to no information regarding the children was recorded on the DV supplemental report.
- There was also a remarkable increase in documentation about the children in the officer's narrative report. In the sample group, 58 cases (62%) had documentation about the children in the narrative report, and only 35 cases (38%) did not have documentation about the children in the officer's narrative. Where there was not documentation in many cases the children were asleep in another room and not directly involved in the incident or the child were not implicated with telephone calls or other contact which was in violation of protection order/no contact orders. This was a significant change in documentation patterns as compared to the June 2002 review of 100 reports and the Shoreline precinct pre-training pilot where very few cases had documentation about the children in the officer's reports.

Information about Children Recorded on KCSO DV Supplemental Form:

The following is a summary of data documented about children in the 93 officer incident reports. This data was extracted from the DV supplemental report, which lists the child's name and date of birth. As part of the training project the DV supplemental added new information to record about the children including their location during the incident and the officer's observations of the children present at the scene. In the 93 reports it was documented that there were a total of **138 children** present at the DV incidents.

Demographic information:

The Table One details the number of children in a family present at a DV incident, the children's sex and the children's ages.

Number of Children in a Family Present at DV Incident (N=93)	Sex of Children (N=138)	Ages of Children (N=138)
56 families with 1 child	80 male children	59 children birth through 5 years of age
24 families with 2 children	55 female children	37 children 6-11 years of age
10 families with 3 children	3 children no information	33 children 12-18 years of age
1 family with 4 children		6 over 19 years of age
2 families no information		3 children no information

Table One: Demographic information for children present at DV incidents

Child Location During the DV Incident:

Officers utilized this new data section on the DV supplemental form. Officers documented the children's location during the DV for 123 children (89%) of the 138 children. The children were present in the following locations at the incident from the most represented to least represented locations: different room in the residence (35%), sleeping or in their bedroom (29%), the same place or location as the DV incident (25%), or no information (11%) was available.

Officer's Observation of Child:

During training the officers were instructed to use this new section on the DV supplemental form to record the officer's observations of the child during their response to the incident. Overall this section was not utilized as effectively as the other items on the DV supplemental form as it was only completed for 69 children or half of the children in the sample. For officers that did complete this section the information was not recorded consistently in this section. Officers recorded for 25 children their observation of the child such as the child was calm, upset, was frozen or unable to show any emotion, or crying. Officers recorded for 44 children what the child had observed during the incident such as child witnessed their parent's injury, the child was involved in the incident or the child saw the aftermath of the incident.

Information on Weapons and Court Orders on DV Supplemental:

The DV supplemental also records other information about the incident including court orders and weapons. The following summarizes this information.

- **Court Orders:**

In the majority of the cases or 71 cases (76%) officers documented that no court orders were in place. In 16 cases (17%) were court orders identified, and in 6 cases (6%) no information about court orders were documented.

- **Weapons at the Home/with perpetrator:**

In the majority of the cases or 66 cases (71%) no weapons were reported by the victim to be in the home or in possession of the perpetrator. In 19 cases (20%) weapons were reported in the home or in possession of the perpetrator. In 8 cases (9%) no information was recorded about weapons.

Race Data:

The DV supplemental form does not have a way to record information about a child's race. In the officer's incident report, there is race information for the suspect and victim. For the 93 cases reviewed the suspects' and victim's races were recorded as follows:

Suspect's Race	Number/Percentage (N=93)	Victim's Race	Number/Percentage (N=93)
White	62 (67%)	White	69 (74%)
Black	19 (20%)	Black	11 (12%)
Asian	8 (9%)	Asian	8 (8%)
Hispanic	2 (2%)	Hispanic	2 (2%)
Indian	2 (2%)	Indian	2 (2%)
		Unknown	1 (1%)

Table Two: Race of Suspect and Victim

Changes in KCSO Documentation of Child Safety Risks in Incident Reports:

- 18 cases in the sample group had indicated child safety risks. In each of the 18 cases the officer's narrative clearly detailed the safety risks posed to the children. Again, this was a significant change from the first 100 report review and pre training pilot where this was not commonly documented in the officer narratives.

Documented Child Safety Risks in KCSO Incident Reports:

The reports were also reviewed for abuse or neglect risks posed to the children from the DV incident, and evidence of criminal charges documented by the responding officer.

- 75 reports (81%) of the sample did not have documented safety risks or abuse/neglect risks to children in the report. In 74 of these cases defendants were charged with misdemeanor crimes including Assault 4, violation of an order, interference with DV reporting, reckless endangerment, vandalism and criminal trespass. With this group there was only one felony charge for a no contact order (NCO) violation. (Note that in this NCO case the child was not listed on the order, thus this case was not included in the sub sample of children with child abuse or neglect risks.)
- 18 reports (19%) of cases had documented safety risks for the children, and 12 of these cases involved misdemeanor crimes as listed above. In 6 reports the officers

recommended the filing of felony charges. When the 18 reports with identified child safety risks were reviewed by KCPAO attorneys, felony charges were filed in 8 cases (44%). The felony charges including felony harassment, felony threats, and Assault 2-with other deadly weapon. The documented child safety risks in these 18 cases were as follows:

- Perpetrator threatened victim or child with a deadly weapon or displayed deadly weapon in child's presence
- Child present in room when perpetrator threatened to kill victim or child
- Child caught in crossfire (was held in victim's arms during assault)
- Child/youth was assaulted when intervening to stop the violence
- Perpetrator assaulted child/youth during DV incident
- Reckless endangerment (child in room where objects being thrown, perpetrator driving recklessly with child in the car)
- Perpetrator violated a child's NCO.

Analysis of CPS Reporting Protocols with Reviewed Cases:

The sub sample of 18 cases with child safety or abuse/neglect risks posed to the children from the DV incidents were then analyzed to see if the CPS reporting protocol developed for the project had correctly identified children who should be referred to CPS. The case reports were reviewed by a CPS program manager and CPS intake supervisor. In analyzing the officer's documentation, the reporting protocol did appropriately identify 17 out of the 18 cases of the sub sample that should be reported to CPS. In the one case that did not meet CPS reporting mandates the incident was perpetrated by an adult who was not a family member and who was not the children's caregiver.

Conclusions from Evaluation Project:

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess documentation patterns and the effectiveness of the CPS reporting protocol. The following strengths and challenges were found with this review.

Officer Documentation:

This evaluation did demonstrate a positive change in the officers' documentation patterns post-training as compared to pre-training baseline data.

- There was a significant improvement in officer's documentation about the children on the DV supplemental form.
- There was a substantial improvement in the quantity and quality of information recorded about what had happened to the children during the DV incident in the officer's narrative of the incident report.
- There was a significant improvement on the documentation of safety risks posed to the children during the DV incident on both the DV supplemental form and narrative report.

CPS Reporting Protocols on KCSO Officer Pocket Guide:

- The CPS reporting protocol devised for the training project did effectively identify cases with child safety risks that should be reported to CPS.
- The CPS reporting protocol gave clarity and guidance to KCSO on when to make CPS reports.
- Other community partners who have reviewed the pocket guide have remarked how useful it is to have guidelines on responding to children with DV. Other community partners have asked if the pocket guide could be adapted for their agencies

Remaining Challenges:

The evaluation also found some challenges that need continued training or follow up.

- The observation of child section on KCSO DV supplemental form should be clarified on what is to be recorded in that section. It appears to be confusing to complete as mentioned above.
- The officers could benefit from updates during their roll call sessions on the positive changes they have made in their documentation. It would also be helpful to assess further training needs or resource support for children present at DV scenes.
- It would be helpful to review of the CPS reporting protocols with officers as only 16% of cases with identified child safety risks were referred to CPS.
- The data recorded in KCSO reports was excellent. However, there is no data collection system in place which would allow for the routine assessment and analysis of what is recorded about the children at DV scenes in the officers' reports. To complete this project's evaluation each report was read to identify the information recorded about children in the DV supplemental and narrative reports, and the data was transferred into a spreadsheet for analysis. This evaluation project was beneficial but it required a significant amount of time to complete.

Domestic Violence Supplemental Form

Case # _____

VICTIM INFORMATION

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____ Race: _____ Sex: _____ DOB: _____

Address Verification: _____

Alternate Contact Name #1: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

VICTIM DEMEANORVictim Appeared: ☐ Angry ☐ Afraid ☐ Crying ☐ Nervous
☐ Apologetic ☐ Calm ☐ Hysterical ☐ Upset ☐ Other _____Excited Utterances: Describe in Detail _____

_____**INCIDENT**Victim Under Influence of Drugs/Alcohol? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk Suspect Under Influence of Drugs/Alcohol? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unk☐ Photographs Taken / Submitted to Photo Lab☐ Physical Evidence RecoveredPhysical Attack: ☐ Grabbed ☐ Punched ☐ Pushed ☐ Slapped ☐ Other _____Threats To: ☐ Assault Victim ☐ Assault Others☐ Damage Property ☐ Take Children☐ Kill Victim ☐ Kill Others ☐ Suicidal Threats☐ Other _____☐ **Stalking**☐ **Strangulation Involved****Symptoms (Check all that apply):**☐ Neck Pain ☐ Sore Throat ☐ Scratches ☐ Difficulty Swallowing ☐ Nausea / Vomiting ☐ Fainting or Unconsciousness ☐ Ears Ringing☐ Tiny Red Spots (Petechia) ☐ Red Marks or Bruising ☐ Light Headed ☐ Raspy Voice ☐ Neck Swelling ☐ Loss of Bodily FunctionPrior Incidents of Strangulation ☐ Yes If Yes, Describe _____ ☐ No**WITNESSES**

Person that called 911: _____

Contacted: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ UnknownStatement(s) Taken from Witnesses: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A**CHILDREN**Children Present During Incident: ☐ Yes If Yes, complete detailed information: _____☐ No ☐ UnknownChild Victim Assaulted/Injured During Incident ☐ Yes If Yes, Describe in Detail: _____☐ No ☐ UnknownStatement(s) Taken from Children: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Children(s) Name (Last, First, Middle) Sex DOB Location During Incident Observations of Child

COURT ORDER INFORMATIONCurrent Court Order Exists: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Respondent Served: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Court Order # _____ Court _____ Expires _____

Type of Order: ☐ No Contact Order ☐ Protection Order ☐ Restraining Order ☐ Anti-Harassment Order

• If Valid NCO/Served Protection Order Exists, Possession of Firearms by Respondent is Prohibited Under Federal Law.

FIREARMS / WEAPONS1. Does the suspect possess, own, or have access to firearms? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

2. Where are the firearms (residence / vehicle / suspect)?

3. Has the suspect used, displayed or threatened to use firearms in the past against you or others? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe: _____

4. If Yes to #3, and [the firearm(s) is (are) present and under the victim's control], do you want KCSO to remove the firearm(s) now?

☐ Yes If yes, described: _____ ☐ No Firearm(s) Taken? ☐ Yes ☐ No5. Firearm / Weapon Used / Involved in Current Incident? ☐ Yes If Yes, Describe _____ ☐ No ☐ N/A6. If Yes to #5, Firearm / Weapon Placed Into Evidence? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Description:

Firearm Make:	Model	Caliber	Serial #	Status:
				Firearm Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
				Firearm Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
				Firearm Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
				Firearm Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIM AND SUSPECT

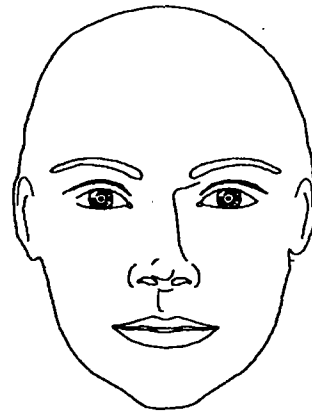
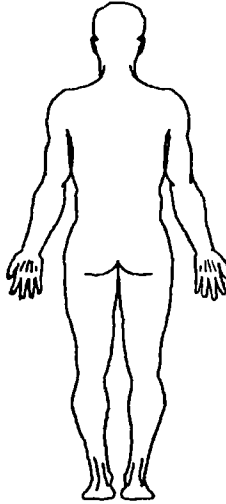
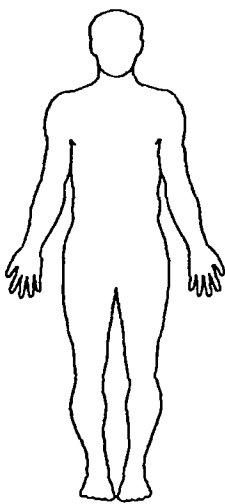
Relationship: _____ Length: _____

Prior DV History ☐ Yes ☐ No☐ Reported ☐ Unreported ☐ Number of Prior Incidents _____

Date of Last Incident: _____

SUSPECT INFORMATIONSuspect Contacted: ☐ Yes ☐ No Miranda warning given by _____ Serial # _____Suspect Injured: ☐ Yes If Yes, describe in report. ☐ No Suspect Photographed: ☐ Yes ☐ NoSuspect demeanor: ☐ Angry ☐ Apologetic ☐ Calm ☐ Crying ☐ Hysterical ☐ Nervous
☐ Threatening ☐ Upset ☐ Violent ☐ Other, describe _____Mental Health History: ☐ Yes If Yes, describe: _____ ☐ No ☐ Unknown**VICTIM INJURIES**☐ Abrasion(s) ☐ Bruise(s) ☐ Complaint of Pain
☐ Hair pulled out ☐ Laceration(s) ☐ Minor cut(s)
☐ Strangulation: Describe in Detail (Page 1)Treatment: ☐ None/Refused ☐ At Scene (Identify)
☐ At HospitalSigned Medical Release: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Refused**SUSPECT INJURIES**☐ Abrasion(s) ☐ Bruise(s) ☐ Complaint of Pain
☐ Hair pulled out ☐ Laceration(s) ☐ Minor cut(s)Treatment: ☐ None/Refused ☐ At Scene (Identify)
☐ At HospitalSigned Medical Release: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Refused**INJURY DIAGRAM**

Deputy is to mark the location of any injuries and describe.



Have victim initial:

_____ I have physically pointed out to the deputy(s) where I was injured.

_____ I have indicated on the diagram where I was injured.

_____ I was able to tell the deputy(s) who injured me.

VICTIM WRITTEN STATEMENT

- ☐ If victim refuses written statement, check and document what was stated in the Incident Report.
☐ Check if additional sheet attached for continuation of victim statement.

"I declare, under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of Washington that the above statements are true and correct."

Victim Signature _____

Deputy Signature _____

Date _____

10. Must Make CPS Referral Within 24 Hours When:

- ☐ The child/youth is at risk of substantial harm from the domestic violence. Examples may include:
 - *Perpetrator interference with child/youth's attempts to report DV*
 - *Perpetrator throws object that could hit and injure the child (reckless endangerment)*
 - *Child in physical jeopardy during assault or destruction of property (child gets caught in DV cross-fire but not injured or child attempts to intervene in DV)*
 - *Perpetrator forces/coerces child to participate in the DV*
 - *Perpetrator displays firearm or lethal weapon in child's presence*
 - *DV patterns escalating in severity or frequency in last 90 days*
 - *Child/youth is witnessing or forced to participate with perpetrator in killing or torturing of a family pet*
 - *Child experiences changes in patterns from exposure to repeated DV incidents (such as sleep deprivation, increased aggressive behaviors, wetting the bed, chronic fear, anxiety or depression)*
 - *Perpetrator interferes with the provision of the child's minimal needs of food, shelter, health, or safety*

11. Should Consider a CPS Referral When:

- ☐ Consider CPS referral when the child may be at risk of harm. When in doubt, contact your supervisor, call CPS Intake or FAX report to CPS.
- ☐ Examples may include:
 - *Perpetrator acts in a cruel, humiliating, and dehumanizing manner to child at a DV scene*
 - *Perpetrator blames child for the domestic violence*
 - *Perpetrator has a history of abuse to children*

This pocket guide was
developed in partnership with
the following agencies:

King County Sheriff's Office

**King County Department of
Community and Human Services**

King County Prosecuting Attorney

Public Health – Seattle & King County

**Region Four,
Washington State Department
of Social and Health Services**

Children/Youth and



Response

Children & Domestic Violence Checklist (Investigation Guidelines)

1. Upon Arrival at Scene

- ☐ Locate children. Determine their whereabouts.
- ☐ Identify each child by name, sex, and age
- ☐ Determine child's proximity/involvement with incident

2. Check on Child's Well Being and Physical Condition

- ☐ Note child's demeanor and emotional state
- ☐ Note any evidence of injury

3. Provide Reassurance/Support to Child

- ☐ Identify yourself and explain your role
- ☐ **Talk to each child in a safe place away from suspects, victim, and siblings**
- ☐ Try to get the child to relax
- ☐ Tell them you are there for their safety
- ☐ Tell the child that the violence is not their fault

4. Talk to Child (Ask simple non-leading questions)

- ☐ Get down on your knees or sit to face the child
- ☐ Do not force the child to talk
- ☐ Ask "Why do you think I am here"
- ☐ Ask "Tell me what happened"
- ☐ Ask "What did you see or hear?"
- ☐ Ask "Has this ever happened before?"
- ☐ Ask the child if they were hurt during the incident
- ☐ If child or caregiver reports injury, call EMS for assessment

5. Assess for Risks of Imminent Harm to Children

- ☐ Determine if perpetrator has violated any court order in effect for the child
- ☐ Determine if domestic violence has been increasing in frequency and intensity
- ☐ Assess perpetrator for **lethality indicators** such as display/use lethal weapon(s) at the scene, threatening suicide or homicide, hostage taking or stalking, inflicting severe violence when using alcohol/drugs and/or with an untreated psychosis or mental health disorder
- ☐ Determine if child can remain safe at scene

6. Determine if Need for Protective Custody

- ☐ Consider protective custody when there is probable cause that the child would suffer further abuse/neglect if not taken into custody

7. Child and Family Resources

- ☐ Offer Children and DV booklet
- ☐ Give DV Protection Act Victim's Right Forms and available resources

8. Completing Incident Report/DV Supplemental Report

- ☐ Document child's name, age, location, level of fear, and risk of imminent harm on the DV supplemental report
- ☐ Indicate if child is a witness or a victim in the incident report
- ☐ Describe the nature of assaults or threats
- ☐ Describe child's involvement with the incident
- ☐ Document child's demeanor and emotional state
- ☐ Record what the child saw/heard at scene
- ☐ Document any assistance/referrals given, or CPS reports
- ☐ Document EMS assistance and names of EMS personnel

Guidelines for CPS Referral in DV Cases

King County Day Time Intake Number:
1-800-609-8764

King County Day Time Intake FAX Number:
206-281-6329

Statewide After Hours Intake Number:
1-800-562-5624

Police Press 9 for next available intake worker

9. Telephone CPS Immediately to Triage Child/Youth's Safety Needs at the DV Scene When:

- ☐ The child is assaulted or injured during the DV incident
- ☐ Perpetrator violates child NCO and/or protection order
- ☐ Discharge of a firearm or use of a lethal weapon in the presence of child
- ☐ The child expresses fear that perpetrator will kill or injure someone in the home
- ☐ Perpetrator commits severe acts of violence and threatens to kill the child
- ☐ Perpetrator displays a pattern of lethality indicators (See section 5). The child remains at high risk of severe injury or death if perpetrator has access to the child.
- ☐ The child's parent/caretaker cannot safely care for child (due to injury, substance abuse, mental health disorder, etc.) and KCSO places child into protective custody

This card provides guidelines for officers responding to domestic violence incidents where children are present. The checklist is intended to assist officers by highlighting common investigation steps. The guidelines on this card will not always be applicable in their entirety because of differing circumstances.